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THE GREAT WAR:

A REVIEW IN MINIATURE.

By

Katharine Stanbery Burgess.



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THE GREAT WAR.

This is to be the very briefest history of the Great War that can possibly be written. It is not an exhaustive review, nor even a short study of conditions and events; it is a hasty outline, for hasty reading, of only the most salient features, intended for those people who, for one reason or another, read nothing at the outbreak, and consequently know nothing now of what it is all about. It is only a skeleton sketch, presented so that he who runs may read—in a quarter of an hour.

On June 28, 1914, the Crown Prince of Austro-Hungary, Franz Ferdinand (nephew of the aged Emperor, Franz Joseph), accompanied by his morganatic wife, the Duchess of Hohenburg, was on a political visit to Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia, which is a province of Austro-Hungary, but which had, till 1908, belonged to Serbia. While driving through the streets, they were killed by a bomb thrown from an upper

window by a Serbian named Cabrino-vic. It was claimed by the Austrian Government that he was a tool of the Narodna Odbrana, a Serbian secret society for the promulgation of doctrines of sedition against Austria. On July 23, Austria addressed an ultimatum to the Serbian Government demanding the punishment of the offenders and the dismissal of all the high officials and army officers who were suspected of complicity; also that all such secret societies be dissolved; that public schools in Serbia eliminate teaching against the sovereignty of Austria; that the shipment of arms and ammunition across the Austro-Serbian frontier be prohibited; that all publications in Serbia inimical to Austria be suppressed; and *that the Serbian Government accept the collaboration of Austria in the suppression of the subversive movement against that monarchy.* Forty-eight hours were given for a satisfactory reply.

Serbia replied within the time and offered full satisfaction, protesting only against certain details (such as Austria's participation in the prosecution

and punishment), and proposing to leave all differences to be settled by the International Tribunal at the Hague, or by the Powers interested at the time of the transfer of Bosnia to Austria. The Dual Monarchy (as Austro-Hungary is called), refused, in spite of protests and offers of mediation from England, Russia, France and Italy, to accept Serbia's terms of restitution, showing that she (Austria) had been bent on aggression, with the murders only as a pretext. The Great Powers had called on Germany also to protest, and she pretended to do so, saying, however, that it should be a matter between Austria and Serbia alone.

On July 28, Austria declared war on Serbia, and immediately followed this up by the force of arms, before which the Serbian armies and strongholds went down, after a gallant defense of many months. Russia, who had been the friend and protector of Serbia, not only protested, but mobilized at once against Austria and even Germany, whom all Europe suspected of aiding and abetting Austria in the quarrel, if

not of actually instigating it. The Republic of France, bound by the alliance called the Triple Entente (France, England and Russia), rose to the defense of Russia, whereupon Germany turned around to crush France.

This was Germany's long hoped for chance for spreading her empire westward and eastward. She proposed to Belgium and to the little independent grand duchy of Luxemburg that she be allowed to send her troops through their territory into France; and to England that that country stand by and allow the offense to be committed. This in spite of a treaty to which Germany, England and France were parties, always to respect the neutrality and integrity of Belgium; but the German Imperial Chancellor, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, assured the English Ambassador to Berlin that Germany contemplated no acquisition of French home territory—only punishment. England, through her Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, who conducted all negotiations (instead of her Premier, Mr. Asquith), refused, owing to

her treaties and to the honor of nations. Luxemburg suffered the passage, but Belgium (through the Ministry and King Albert) refused to be made the pathway of the enemies of France, and mobilized against the invaders.

On August 1, Germany had declared war against Russia; now, on August 3, she commenced the siege of Liege (in Belgium), and on the next day declared war. On that same day, August 4, England declared war on Germany, and Lord Kitchener prepared a campaign, sending over regular troops and raising a further volunteer army. (This great general was drowned in the summer of 1916, when his ship, on the northern passage to Russia, struck a mine near the north coast of Scotland. He has been succeeded as Commander-in-Chief by General Robertson.)

Italy did not enter the war until the spring of 1915, and then on the side of the Allies (Triple Entente). She, with Germany and Austria, had formed the old "Triple Alliance"; but she refused

to join them at the first, as the terms of their treaty bound her to join them *only in case of war into which the other two were drawn by self-defense*. They tried to coerce her, but she remained neutral until 1915, when self-protection caused her to declare war on Austria alone. This conflict with her old ally she has waged ever since, with great losses on both sides and no conclusive victory. In course of time, Turkey and Bulgaria were drawn in with Germany and Austria, and these four are now known as the Central Powers (or, sometimes, the Teutonic Powers, on account of the domination of Germany and Austria). The two new powers were prompted by self-interest and by assurances of support and protection and aggrandizement; and it is well known that through them Germany saw her way to the Black Sea and the Far East.

The fires of war spread; and finally the Entente Allies comprised (in order of their entrance) : Serbia, Russia, England, France, Belgium, Montenegro, Japan, Italy, Portugal and Rumania.

Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro (Italy's friend) and Rumania were soon crushed and subjugated—Montenegro, indeed, surrendered; Japan (brought in on account of England and Russia) confined her warfare to operations in Eastern waters and chiefly against German stations in China; and Portugal, beyond some brilliant assistance to the Allies in Africa, has been a belligerent in name only. The African campaign was waged by the colonies of the opposing nations, resulting mostly to the advantage of the Allies. A German and Turkish offensive was sent into Egypt against the British rule, but that was ineffective.

Belgium, through a long series of battles, sieges, rapine, devastation and wanton murders and cruelties, fell a prey to German rage in the first autumn of the war. Forts, cities, villages, all the land, went down before the conquerors, who soon took the capital, Brussels, and, before long, the fortified city of Antwerp, to which the seat of government had been hastily transferred. The government was then set

up at Bordeaux, in France. Habitations, churches and all the monuments of civilization were destroyed, huge indemnities (for resistance!) were imposed on the nation, railways, factories and all public works were confiscated, citizens were deported to Germany, and the conquerors' occupation began, in every sense. The Belgian Army, after long resistance, escaped and joined forces with the French Army, though a number of troops, being driven across the border into neutral Holland, were obliged to submit to internment there; and as many of the stricken population as could, in the early days when exit was possible, fled to England, where they found sanctuary.

The German Chancellor had declared in the Reichstag (the Imperial Parliament) that the treaty concerning Belgium was only "a scrap of paper," which Germany might tear up at will. And so it was done. And when the army reached France, a similar campaign was begun. In spite of the Chancellor's assurances to England, *Germany wanted Paris*; and what was

more, she wanted Calais, from which to strike at England, whom she now hated with the most bitter fury for having meddled and interposed. Up and down the northeast territory of France, the battles (chiefly trench warfare) have raged, success fluctuating from one side to the other, and neither side gaining a conclusive victory. After the long and murderous battles of Mons, the Marne, the Aisne and the Somme, the two great objectives still remain inviolate; but the country to the southwest of Belgium has been for two years and a half in the possession of the enemy, who has held Belgium as a base. The recent Franco-British drive, which, under the joint command of General Nivelle (successor to General Joffre) and General Sir Douglas Haig (successor to General Sir John French), has driven the Germans back toward this base, is revealing the occupied and now abandoned territory to have been as ruthlessly devastated and depleted of inhabitants, civilization and possibilities of agriculture as was ever Belgium itself. As I write, the

Allies are closing in around St. Quentin and successfully storming the whole Arras front, the great rear stronghold of the German Commander, Field Marshal von Hindenburg; but it is not safe to predict the outcome.

This is France's "punishment"; and yet the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, of the Prussian House of Hohenzollern, has claimed that the war was forced upon him and his people by the avarice and treachery of England, who was moved to the defense of Belgium only by the desire to remain mistress of the seas, and greed to wrest from Germany all of her world trade!

England set herself to starve out Germany by the naval cordon which she drew around German ports and approaches; and the large majority of the German fleet has remained, perforce, bottled up in the Baltic. But her sea raiders roved the oceans of the world, destroying Allied shipping, and her submarine warfare has inflicted the greatest damage on the British Navy and merchant marine and private shipping, as well as on those of the other Al-

lies; and lately on the shipping of neutral countries, even hospital and relief ships not being exempted. Admiral von Tirpitz is the instigator of this warfare. England has caught and destroyed many of these submarines, and the damage they inflict is on only a small per cent of the entire sailing list; yet it is still a menace to be reckoned with. The Zeppelin expeditions against England, while wreaking much destruction, have not been wholly successful, many dirigibles having been brought down, and the results not justifying the cost to Germany in money or lives. Aeroplanes have become so common in all the greater armies that they have changed the balance but little on either side.

Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, having as yet remained neutral, have allowed some food supplies to slip into Germany, and she has commandeered the crops of conquered Rumania; but her own production is far too short, and she is facing a real famine, which may turn the tide of battle before arms shall have a chance to pre-

vail. It is for this reason that she has enlarged the scope of her submarine aggressions, in the last two months and a half, without regard to international law or humanity, having put all neutral shipping under the ban, except as subject to the most impossible and humiliating restrictions. Yet the British blockade still goes on, undeterred by its own fractional losses.

On September 1, 1914, Russia changed the historic name of her capital, St. Petersburg (a Teutonic derivative), to the Russian form, Petrograd. The Czar, Nicholas II, suffered his cousin, the Grand Duke Nicholas, to command the army, which was varyingly successful—its first great drive against Austria came very near to being a victory, but through some mysterious means was turned to a defeat. Then the Czar banished his cousin to the Eastern campaign and assumed the role of Commander-in-Chief himself (though not in the field). The net result was no better, despite the great bravery and efficiency of the army; and it finally developed that Russia, the

great Ally, was being honey-combed by German propaganda and espionage, which accomplished many failures in the field and a huge shortage in the food supply; there was treachery in the Cabinet and at the Court itself. The whole thing culminated in the Russian Revolution, on March 15, this year (1917), when, with little bloodshed, the Czar was deposed, a new democracy formed, the government put into the hands of the Duma (Parliament) and a temporary Committee, the Jews enfranchised, political prisoners pardoned (including those in Siberia) and the Grand Duke Nicholas recalled to the command of the Army. The new order of things is still an experiment; the danger lies in the extreme swing of the pendulum, and in the very faint chance of Germany being able to persuade the new democracy to a separate peace.

But the Army and the Navy have sworn allegiance to the revolutionary government; and the latest operations in the East (southward, against the Turks) have been wholly successful; the Russian force has swept down, car-

rying victory before it, taking Turkish strongholds, one after another, past Kermanshah, in Persia, till it has joined the great British Army of General Maude. This mighty English expedition, across almost insuperable barriers, has forged eastward, taken historic Bagdad from the Turks, and progressed northward until the Anglo-Russian chain is complete.

Greece, which has been right in the Eastern theater of war, has so far been able to keep out of a declaration and actual belligerency, though only after serious internal conflict between the opinions and forces of King Constantine (declaredly neutral, but probably influenced by his Queen, Sophie, the sister of the Kaiser) and those of Premier Venezelos, who, with a large part of the country behind him, was progressive and violently pro-Ally. Greece has not entered the war on either side, but the Allies have virtually seized it as a basis of operations and established over it an enforced protectorate, military and political, and have compensated it with immense financial aid.

Russian Poland, being part of Russian territory, fell during the western reverses of the great empire, and has been reduced to a state resembling that of devastated Serbia. Switzerland, whether because of the strong treaties that protect her or because of her impregnable mountain passes, is still neutral. Spain too is neutral, though she is now receiving affronts from Germany in the sinking of her vessels.

In 1916, Germany offered peace to the Allies; on terms of her own, however, among which was her continued occupation of Belgium, beside other impossible demands. They were categorically and unequivocally rejected; and it was on this ground, as well as to break the blockade, that she avowed her intention (which she is now carrying out) of making her submarine warfare more of a reign of terror than ever—of punishing her enemies till they should cry Enough! The revolutionary spirit is contagious, and it is on the point of breaking out in Germany; but the Government, on the other hand, is attempting to sow seeds of sedition and

of submission to Germany in the new Russian democracy, beside planning a campaign to break into Russian territory by land and by sea. How long this diamond-cut-diamond struggle can hold out, how long the decimated armies and populations, the low credits, the scarce munitions and scarcer food supplies will last, is still problematical—with so many odds on both sides.

America's Part in the War.

At the very outset, almost, of hostilities, when the Germans invaded Belgium and committed acts that were the horror of the whole world, American indignation was aroused. There was then no compelling cause for the entrance of the United States into the war, but the Allied nations did expect it to make a formal, if not a threatening, protest to the German Government, in the name of justice and humanity. This protest was not forthcoming, and the watchword that was given out to all American citizens was "Neutrality"; though this did not prevent the sending of immense relief of all kinds to strick-

en Belgium—and later to France, Poland, Serbia and other oppressed and famished peoples.

Business and trade proceeded—though not as usual. Imports from Germany became fewer and fewer, on account of the blockade kept up by England, and finally ceased altogether; then when the German submarine system became such a great menace, those from Allied countries fell off. Exports suffered from the same causes, though in a different way. England instituted detention and search of American merchant vessels bound for hostile and even neutral countries, for contraband articles and materials. This was the subject of much diplomatic wrangling; but the United States finally accepted England's attitude, especially as it was only a matter of delay and not necessarily of confiscation when nothing contraband was discovered. Immense amounts of foodstuffs, ammunition and raw materials were being supplied to the Allies by American private interests, but the blockade effectually pre-

vented any so disposed from selling to Germany and her colleagues.

The conditions of the European War affected the prosperity of the United States enormously, both for good and for bad; and it is doubtful whether this would finally have been taken into account. But it was the loss of American lives, on passenger ships and on merchant vessels belonging to the Allies, that became the most crying menace, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, in the spring of 1915, being the greatest and most wholesale murder to which the country was forced to submit. Our own ships, even, were not exempt; but the Government at Washington trusted, for a long time and with much patience, to diplomacy to avert the evil effects of such acts and to hold Germany and Austria (the latter's submarines had also sunk many ships) to commit no more.

Meanwhile, the United States was found to be a hotbed of German plots and espionage, and the destruction of various ammunition plants and grain elevators has been laid to their success.

Our own insufficient army was engaged, off and on, with the revolutions and counter-revolutions in Mexico, which made more than one murderous break over the border into our own territory; and the sight of our inefficiency there must have been a cheering thing to Germany, for she planted propaganda in Mexico against the United States—propaganda which has long been suspected, but which has only recently come to light. On the strength of our threatened quarrel with Japan (concerning Japanese immigration), she attempted an intrigue with that country, also, in spite of the fact that Japan was already sworn to the side of the Allies! Both plots, happily, have failed; Mexico is still a dangerous menace, but the searchlight is turned on her and her Teutonic accomplice; and Japan has pledged us her faith.

When, in January last, Germany announced her unrestricted submarine warfare, to commence on February 1, our Government could stand the strain no longer; and on February 2 it broke off diplomatic relations with Germany,

gave her Ambassador, Count von Bernstorff, his passports and recalled our own Ambassador, Gerard, from Berlin. Our Congress was on the eve of adjournment; and before the President, Mr. Wilson, could obtain from it the authority to arm our merchant ships and send them out to brave the submarine danger, a small pacifist element in the Senate filibustered over the measure until it was too late, and the adjournment was accomplished. But the President went ahead and armed the ships, backed by legal authority, and called an extra session of the whole Congress for April 2.

Meanwhile the depredations went on, and it was about this time that the German plots with Mexico and Japan were unearthed. When Congress met, the President appeared before a joint session and delivered a speech for War—a speech which has rung through the world as the greatest battle cry for freedom since Gettysburg, and which has redeemed America in the eyes of all nations fighting for, or believing in, right, justice and democracy. The Sen-

ate, on April 4, and the House of Representatives, on April 5, passed the war resolution; and on Friday, the 6th of April, the United States declared war on Germany.

Cuba declared war on Germany on April 7; Brazil and other South American countries are breaking with the Teutonic powers, and China is on the verge of war with Germany. Austria broke off diplomatic relations with us on April 7.

We are only half prepared, as to an Army and a Navy, to enter the conflict; but preparations are being advanced on an immense scale, and meanwhile the very name of our support is putting life into the Allies and menacing the cause of Germany—especially as Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey are beginning to show signs of war weariness, and as Socialist pressure in Germany itself is already threatening the autocracy of the Imperial Government. And as Congress is now passing a \$7,000,000,000.00 war loan, \$3,000,000,000.00 of which will go to the Allies, our monetary assistance will play a

great part in the earlier restoration of peace, beside the munitions and food-stuffs which we shall continue to send over. Coast defense and military control of alien uprising here at home we shall be obliged to keep up from the very start, beside a strong defensive against Mexico; and a large army of tillers of the soil must be organized and maintained in order to increase our already short food supply and to feed ourselves and our Allies. The country is at war in every sense of the word, whether an American regiment ever sets foot on foreign territory or not.

The story of our belated entrance and the political, military, naval and economic outlook for America are long and complicated; but I have condensed them into a few words for two reasons. Those who have neglected European history have at least kept abreast of developments in our own country during the last two months, in all probability; and as I write, events are changing so rapidly around us that to keep this little pamphlet from the press from day to day, in order to add to the story,

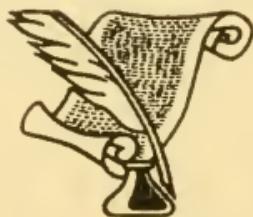
would mean an endless delay. From this point on, anyone who has read what I have written may easily pick up the threads, even if he must go back a week or more from the date of publication. He must remember, too, that I have not meant to write an offensively partisan account of the story of the war, nor, in this latter part of it, a patriotic appeal; that is not needed. This is intended only as salient information.

The most beautiful factor of the War—of all wars—I have left till the last: the Red Cross. Where warfare destroys, the Red Cross saves, builds, uplifts. It is kept up by all civilized nations in order to make war less hideous and to rescue the brave and the innocent from the jaws of death and from suffering; it is love following in the wake of hatred. Like our Army and Navy, this Department of Mercy in our country has been sadly deficient in size, though not in proportionate efficiency; now it is being enlarged, strengthened, recruited for, until soon we shall support one of the greatest organizations in the world. There is too

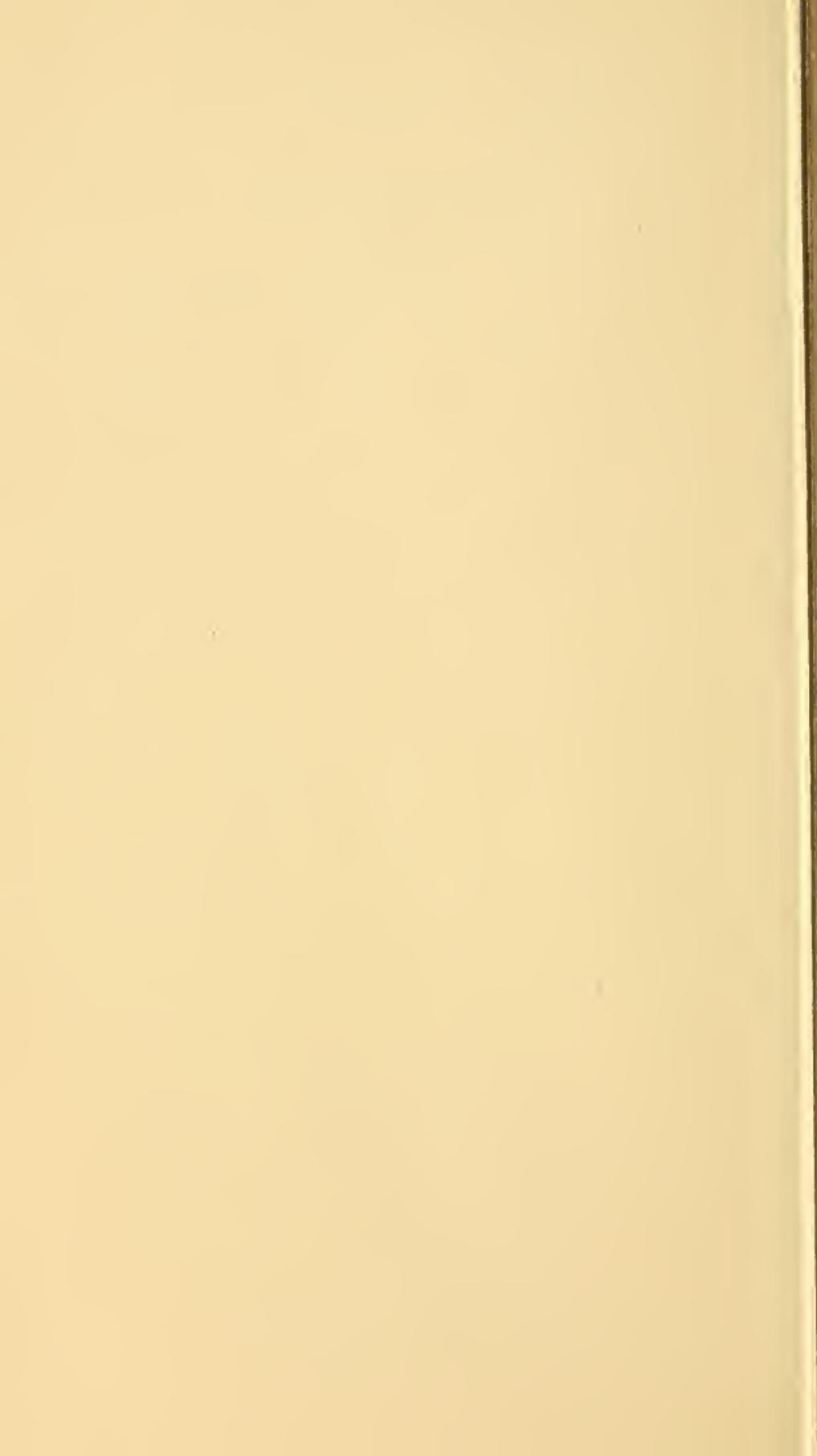
much charity in America for the Red Cross to fail.

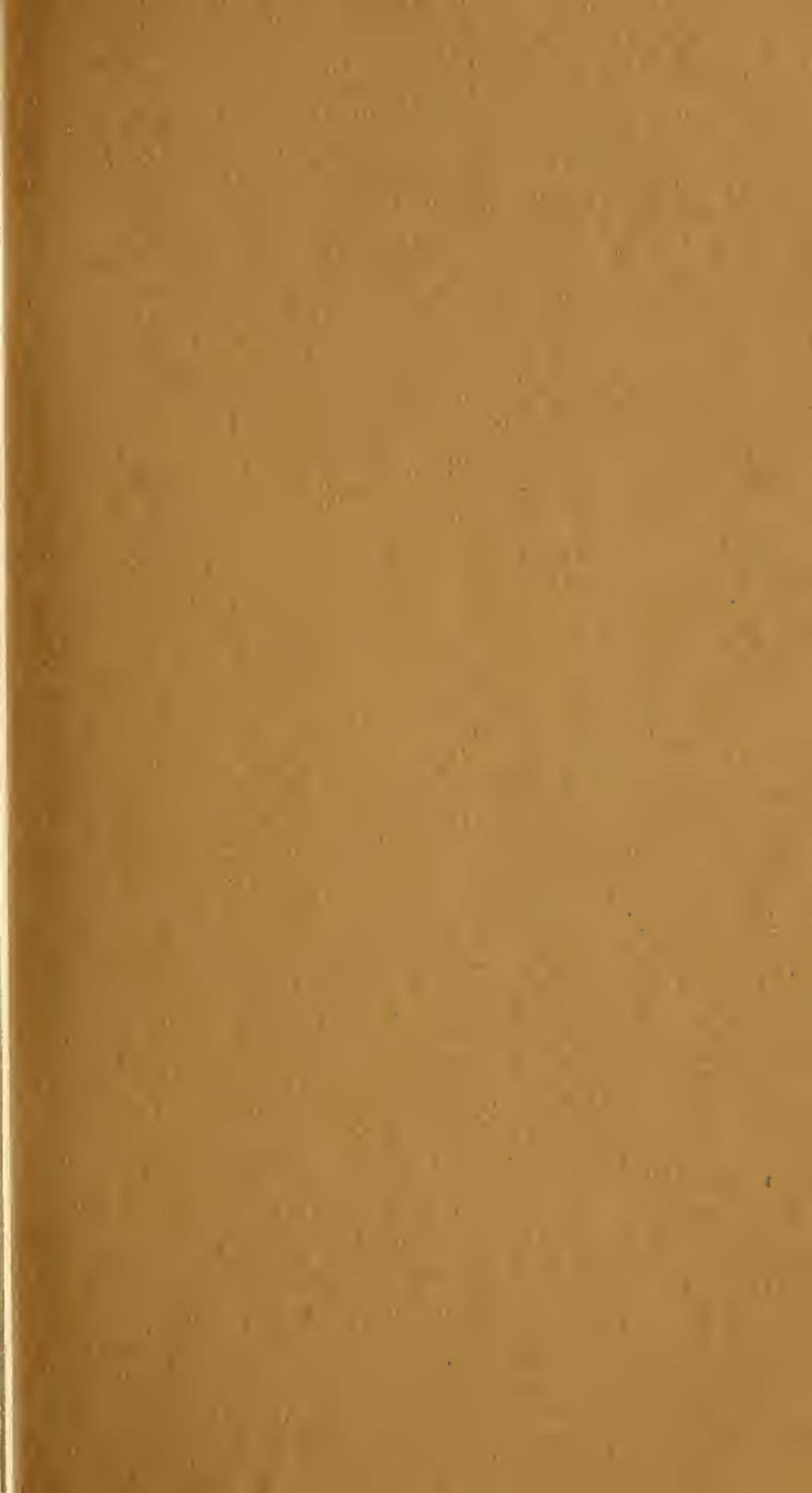
The Day has come none too soon. This is not only a war of self-defense for us: whatever our fortunes, it will go down to history as a war for the establishment of Righteousness throughout the world.

April 16, 1917.









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